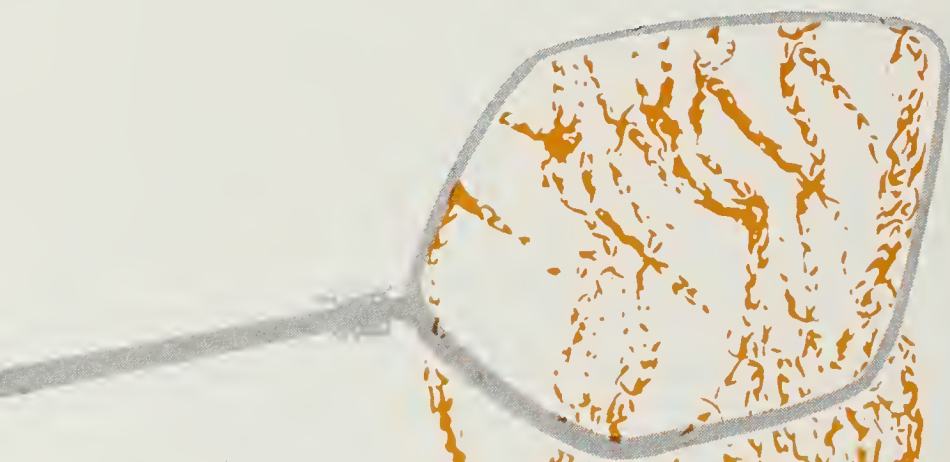


Pam

Lepers & Leprosy

A BROKEN NET





A BROKEN NET

*the story of leprosy missions
in southeast asia*

published by American Leprosy Missions, Inc.



Man's Inhumanity

In some South China villages, so it has been said, victims of the disease called leprosy were hunted down like criminals and caught in a large net so that the superstitious, fearful captors could avoid contamination. The net was so strong it defied the entangled victim's frantic and desperate attempts to escape.

Equally strong is the invisible net woven of prejudice, ignorance, fear and legend-based superstition which for many centuries had held in an inhumanly cruel bondage innocent victims of a curable illness, now often known as Hansen's disease.

Though experts today discount many historical records concerning the growth and spread of "leprosy," believing the term to have encompassed a number of different afflictions, the disease has probably been known in Southeast Asia since before the Christian era. There is no disagreement, however, about the innumerable recorded instances of torture, death, imprisonment and criminal neglect of those who were so unfortunate as to contract Hansen's disease.

First break in the cruel net woven about its victims was made in the 19th century when Christian missionaries began to extend their ministry into the vast sprawling area of Southern Asia, bringing with them the concepts of love and brotherhood and the instruments of healing and teaching. As medical knowledge advanced, so did the care and treatment of the thousands with Hansen's disease who had found their first refuge in missions.

Today, in the same area where sick people were caught in nets and hauled off to be burned alive, the government is cooperating with Christian missions in finding jobs for former patients who have been discharged as arrested cases from one of the most modern and well-equipped sanatoria in Southern Asia.

The net of disease and ignorance, cruelty and superstition, has been broken by Christian love, modern enlightenment and the miraculous advances of medical science.



Christian Oasis in the Land of Buddha

A few years ago in northern Thailand, a Buddhist walked through the gates of the McKean Leprosy Home, just outside the city of Chiangmai, and handed to the assistant director, Maw Boon Lert Santanin, a substantial sum of money.

"I have often heard of the fine Christian work you have done for this country's leprosy sufferers," the Buddhist stranger told the astonished Boon Lert, "and I just wanted to express my deep gratitude."

Every year since then the same Buddhist has returned with a contribution.

This incident typifies the attitude of the great majority of Buddhist Thais toward Chiangmai's famous, half-century-old Presbyterian (U.S.A.) hospital-community for Hansen's disease.

For example, during the filming of "The Life in My Hands," a movie about one of the patients at Chiangmai, several scenes were shot inside a Buddhist temple showing priests conducting a service. Though permission is rarely granted for such shots, in this case it was given by the head priest who was sympathetic to the Christian work at Chiangmai.

In an overwhelming Buddhist country, more than 400 of the 500 patients at the McKean Home are Christians, including a number of former Buddhist priests who were converted during their period of treatment.

What is the secret of this powerful Christian influence in the land of Buddha?

It began back in 1893 when Presbyterian missionaries in Chiangmai, 500 miles north of Bangkok, began to give food, clothing and medicines to wandering beggars who were outcast because of their disease. In 1908 an American Presbyterian missionary doctor, James W. McKean, asked for and received from the Governor of Northern Siam a deserted jungle island where he

built rude bamboo huts for eight patients. Within ten years there was a patient population of 200, dozens of charming white cottages for patients, and many large brick buildings.

Today its 500 inhabitants live, work, study, play and worship in a beautiful, well-organized industrial-agricultural community. There are 50 houses for patients and staff members, two churches, two schools, a hospital, a clinic, a large recreation hall and theatre, three separate homes for children, and dozens of shops.

The community is self-governed and committees are appointed to manage the industries which provide both a creative outlet for talented patients and a measure of self-support for the colony. Among these are wood-carving, carpentry, tailoring and weaving, tile-making, the production of charcoal and stick lac (a kind of shellac) pig raising, gardening and farming.

Though the hospital-community will continue to be a home for aged patients and those who are hopelessly crippled, its significance in this era of medical advance lies in its function as a training and teaching center. It is home-base for twenty-two preventive villages developed by Dr. Richard S. Buker, Baptist leprologist in this Presbyterian work, in line with the modern concept of treating patients more effectively and economically in their own homes.

Located throughout northern Thailand from five to 300 miles outside Chiangmai, these villages are economically self-contained units, and their 2,000 patients receive the most modern and effective medical treatment from Chiangmai-trained assistants.

The villages also provide a practice field for the two-week leprosy course held at Chiangmai twice a year. In addition to Thai students and representatives of government and public agencies, workers of all denominations from Thailand, Indo-China, Burma and Malaya have attended these unique classes, where every student learns by doing, and have returned to set up programs in their own mission fields.

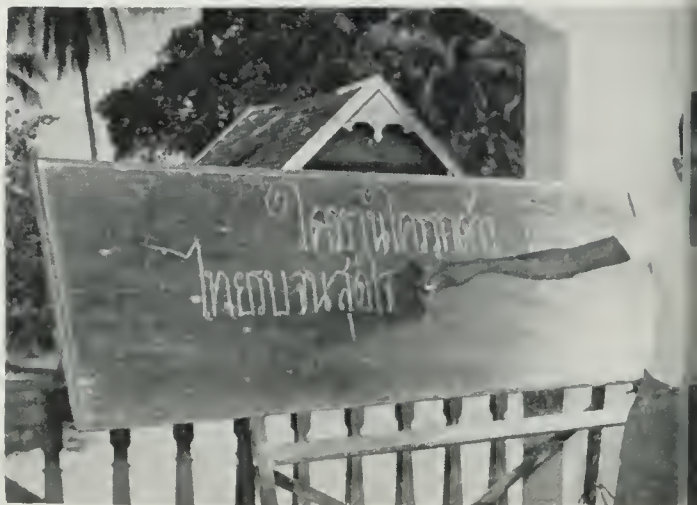
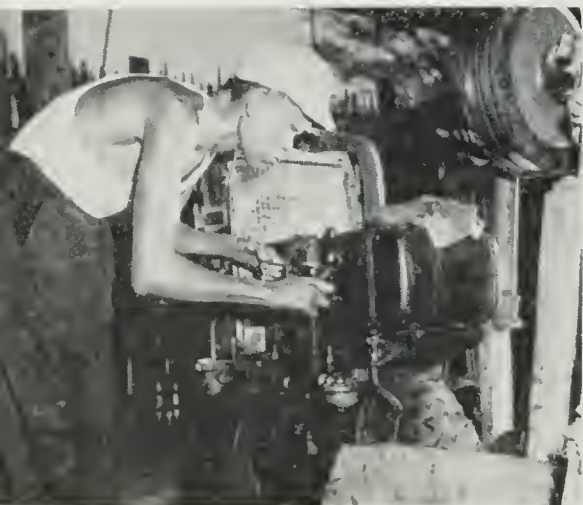
This Christian cooperative effort has resulted in reaching an additional 5,000 victims of Hansen's disease in northern Thailand not only with the body-healing sulfone drugs, but also with the story of the soul-healing Gospel.

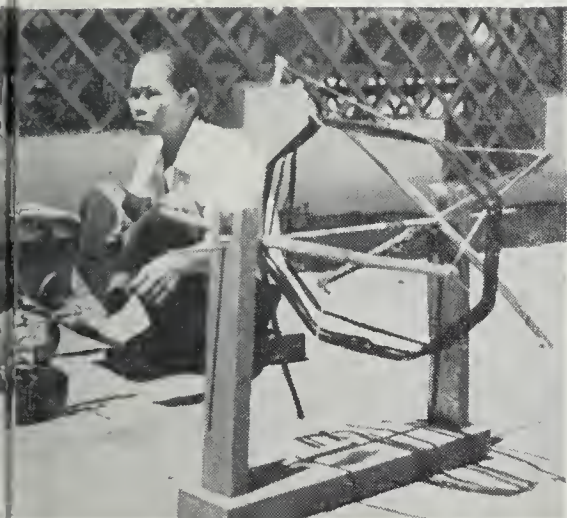


Sulfone therapy came too late for some aged, crippled and helpless patients. Chiang-mai provides a haven of security where they can live out the rest of their lives in constructive work and play, and find rich fulfillment in Christian worship.



One of Chiangmai's outstanding contributions to H.D. control in Thailand is the missionary training course for workers of all denominations in Thailand and Indo-China



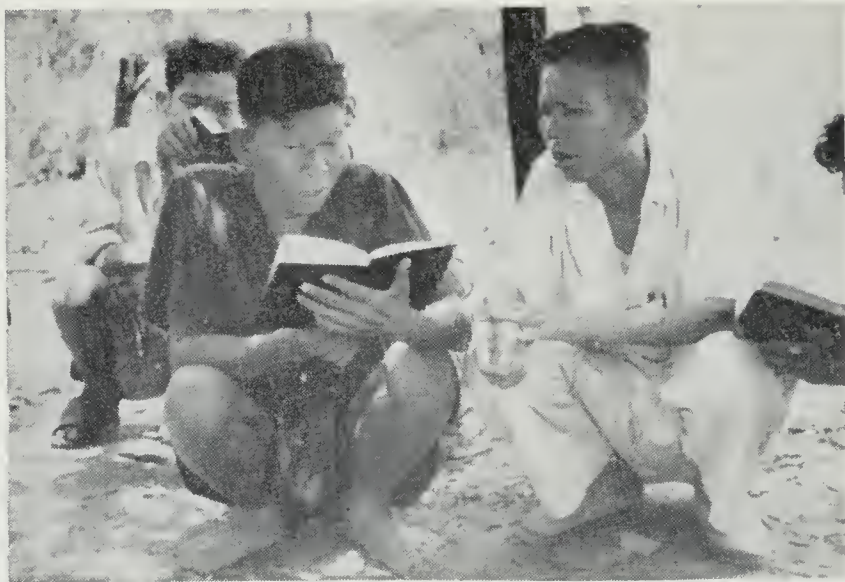


Healthful recreation is as important as medicine in fighting disease. Under a skilled athletic supervisor the young men and boys in Chiangmai become proficient in all kinds of games and sports.



Because patients now look forward to leaving the hospital and returning to their home communities, literacy and training in modern and useful skills are stressed. At right Christmas presents from America are distributed among the patients.





Through village treatment centers in northern Thailand many patients hear the Gospel message for the first time.

In 1951 a group of Christian and Missionary Alliance missionaries doing evangelistic work in northeastern Thailand around Khonkaen sent an urgent SOS to Dr. Buker to discuss the problem of many untreated cases of Hansen's disease in that area. Under his supervision and with financial aid from American Leprosy Missions, the first Christian and Missionary Alliance clinic was set up at Khonkaen. And when Dr. Buker's leprosy courses at Chiangmai were started both missionaries and patients journeyed the long distance north and west to learn the latest and best methods of treatment.

By the beginning of 1956, 41 clinics had been established in eight provinces and almost 4,000 men, women and children were being treated. A Bible school for Hansen's disease patients was in its third year with some 50 students. And a home for healthy children cared for some 30 youngsters whose parents were under treatment.

This amazing and still rapidly-growing medical-evangelistic work is almost completely self-supporting though American Leprosy Missions continues to give a small sum for maintenance. Clinic patients are charged 5¢ per week and also pay a small sum for additional medicines, such as iron tablets and vitamins. Bible school tuition payments total more than \$500 a year and help not only to maintain the school but also to send students

out to neighboring villages on teaching and preaching missions.

In another part of Thailand, near one of its ancient capitals, Sukotai, the Worldwide Evangelization Crusade has established eight similar clinics, also with American Leprosy Missions' financial aid and under Dr. Buker's supervision.



Ca Ha's Promise

During World War II, a crippled patient at the Baptist settlement for Hansen's disease at Kentung in Burma, stayed behind while many other patients fled the bombing, the fighting and the terrors of the war. Ca Ha remained because he had faith in his new-found God, to whom he made the promise that when peace was restored he would use his remaining life and health to share his new knowledge of Christian love with all his people.

When the war was over, most of the patients returned to the colony, which was then under government control. But Ca Ha, mindful of his promise to God, decided that he could serve more effectively in one of the remote leprosy villages where leaders and workers were sadly lacking. Despite his crippled feet, the indomitable Christian made the painful four-day journey to his destination and the fulfillment of his promise to his Lord.

He is still there today, preaching, teaching patients to read, to sing and to work.

It is largely because of the devotion of patients and self-made leaders like Ca Ha that the chain of ten self-supporting and self-governing Hansen's disease villages throughout Kentung State are still in existence today. Established twenty years ago by the missionary twins, Dr. Richard S. and Rev. Raymond B. Buker under the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, the villages have been without unified leadership during the war years and much of the politically tense period since then, though they have received financial help from American Leprosy Missions. Every effort is now being made to secure a fulltime director.



BURMA

KENG TUNG •

CHIENGMAI •

MOULMEIN •

SUKOTAI •

KHONKAEN •

THAILAND

SOUTHEAST ASIA

HONG KONG



American Leprosy Missions
shares the costs of the Moulmein colony
with The Mission to Lepers of London,
and the costs of the Chiangmai colony with the
Government of Thailand. In Hong Kong
it subsidizes a research worker
and in the Philippines maintains a religious
ministry in nine government units.



Paradox in Burma

In the modern and progressive country of Burma superstitions still abound. Fearful folk place candles or lanterns at night on dangerous street crossings to placate the spirits of those killed in accidents. Socialist Prime Minister U Nu's wife consults with an astrologer before making important dates. And it was less than seventy-five years ago that Burma's last King Thibaw ordered 500 Burmese and 100 foreigners buried alive at his palace gate, believing their spirits would protect his soul.

In this land of paradox one of the most ancient and fearful of all superstitions is slowly dying a natural death. Modern medicine has replaced death and exile as a treatment for Hansen's disease. Discharged patients are accepted increasingly back into their home communities without incident. Treatment centers in Rangoon for Hansen's disease are termed skin clinics by enlightened officials to avoid embarrassment to patients. And a former victim of the disease, who only ten years ago was ostracized and denied the right to finish medical school, is now a full-fledged doctor, working in close cooperation with the government in establishing a widespread H.D. control program.

A great share of the credit for Burma's changing attitudes toward a disease long considered a punishment for sins goes to the Susan Haswell Leprosy Home just outside the city of Moulmein. Founded in 1891 by the famous Baptist missionary whose name it bears, the Home in its early days was nothing more than an asylum for a few homeless derelicts found in the crowded bazaars scrounging for food. It was first maintained by government funds and visited regularly by government doctors.

As the destitute patients began to improve with decent food and good care, the Home's reputation began to attract many patients from all parts of Burma and from every kind of background. In 1918 the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society took over complete responsibility for the growing institution,



To overcome his bitter loneliness, Dr. Edwards adopted little Maung Hla Shwe, and gave him equal doses of sulfones and tender loving care. Now the young lad is one of the brightest, happiest children in the community and a pet of all the patients. Eager to learn, he finds his father the best of all possible teachers.

Here Maung Hla Shwe displays his reading skills. From the Bible he has learned something of the true meaning of Susan Haswell Leprosy Home and what it gives all its patients.



whose financing was then undertaken by the Mission to Lepers (London) and American Leprosy Missions.

Today the Moulmein Home bears little resemblance to that early asylum. It is a happy, active hospital-community whose primary function is the treatment, cure and rehabilitation of its patients. In addition to 232 resident patients, 60 of whom are school children, almost 700 outpatients come in regularly.

Under the inspired leadership of Dr. John Edwards, a former patient, and with the increasingly effective sulfone therapy, morale has reached a new high. Last year 34 patients were discharged as symptom-free. Everyone who can work has a job to do. Patients raise and mill their own rice, weave and tailor their own clothes, grow their own vegetables.

When a new building program was made possible in 1955 by government grants, the patients decided to do the building themselves. With only one trained carpenter and one mason these determined patients, some crippled, completed a new hospital for Dr. Edwards, a twenty-room dormitory for girls and a twenty-five bed medical and surgical ward for men. During the process of building these brick-noggin structures with teak window and door frames, eager amateurs were transformed into experienced masons and carpenters, who will now have skills to support them after leaving the hospital.

In the lives of three Moulmein patients, the development of Hansen's disease therapy is graphically illustrated.

Marjorie Wilkins Huan, a sensitive, beautiful, educated English girl living in Burma, emerged from her personal Slough of Despond to become a glowing symbol of hope and faith for all Moulmein patients in the critical period just before, during and after devastating World War II. Struck down by the disease in the midst of a promising teaching career, and before the sulfones came into use, the young girl, crippled and weakened by the disease, overcame her own tragedy in a life of service to others.

Dr. John Edwards was luckier. Though the disease, whose symptoms appeared in his first year at medical school, at one time threatened to put an end to his hopes and ambitions, the advent of the sulfone drugs averted this tragedy.

Now cured and unblemished, the 43-year-old doctor has found a rich and full life in directing the medical program at Moulmein, introducing new and better methods of treatment, watching over the spiritual and emotional as well as the physical needs of his patients. Attracted by his work at the Susan Haswell Home, the government of Burma recently commissioned him to carry out an extensive survey of both private and public schools as a part of the new national program of control.

But the luckiest patient of the three is eight-year-old Maung Hla Shwe. His disease was detected early by Dr. Edwards, who adopted him and gave him equal doses of sulfones and tender loving care. The gay, active, intelligent little boy, with his strong, sturdy body, will never undergo the physical suffering of Marjorie, nor his foster father's long period of despair. Modern medicine and Christian missions gave Maung Hla Shwe his chance for a long, happy and useful life.



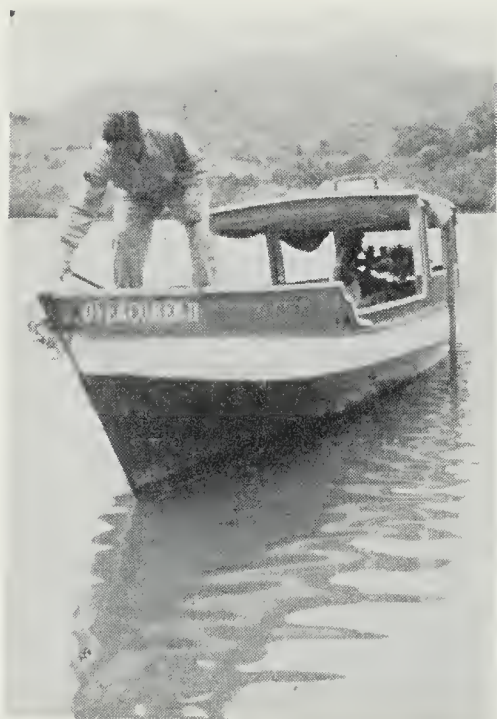
Bread is a Way of Life

Bread is more than a staff of life for a group of Hansen's disease patients in the Philippines. It is almost a way of life.

Bread is the means by which 400 Protestant patients in the large sanatorium at Culion join together in a cooperative Christian endeavor. It is the means by which many non-believers are brought to Christianity. It provides work for many needy patients. It even pays a tithe to the church.

After the war the price of bread spiralled sky-high in Culion. There was no bakery on the island and transportation from Manila was difficult. A thriving black market was in the making.

Rev. Ulpiano Evangelista of the Philippine Evangelical Leprosy Mission worried about the state of his patients' health, for most of them were so poor they couldn't afford black market prices. A man of direct action, he decided that the best way to have bread was to bake it.



To spread the Gospel of love and healing to Protestant patients in nine government hospitals on widely scattered islands, the Evangelical Leprosy Mission uses every kind of transportation, including trucks, station wagons and a motor launch.



Largest of the self-help projects started by industrious patients on Culion is the Evangelical Cooperative Bakery, run on a share-the-profit basis.



Today Culion's Evangelical Cooperative Bakery, run entirely by patients on a share-the-profit basis, sells not only to its own members, but also to the government hospital and all of its patients on the island. It has resulted in stabilizing the price of bread in Culion and has raised health standards immeasurably.

The example of Christianity in action has been so effective in the bakery, which pays a tithe to the church, that almost all the non-believers who have been employed there since it was started in 1945 have been converted.

Other self-help projects started by the Philippine Evangelical Leprosy Mission, a committee composed of members of most of the Evangelical churches working in the Philippine Islands, include raising and selling fruits and vegetables, poultry farming.

In an overwhelmingly Catholic country the Protestant ministry in the nine government sanatoria in the Philippines has been amazingly successful. It began back in 1922 when Rev. and Mrs. Paul Frederick Jansen began visiting patients in Culion, at that time the largest hospital for Hansen's disease in the world with a patient population of more than 5,000.

Of the 18,500 estimated cases of Hansen's disease on the islands, some 6,000 are now cared for in the nine sanatoria of Bicol, Tala, Cotabato, Culion, Dansalan, Cebu City, Jolo, Zamboanga and Santa Barbara.

The Evangelical Mission not only is concerned with the physical comfort of patients in the widely scattered sanatoria; they also see that the Gospel is made available to those who are isolated from normal contacts with churches. One measurement of their success might well be the fact that there are now 815 active Protestants, well over the expected ten percent.

The only fulltime employees of the Mission are the dedicated and zealous team of Pastor Evangelista and his wife. Living on Culion, they have developed two strong churches with seven scattered preaching points which are reached by a motor launch.

With financial help from American Leprosy Missions over the years, the Mission has been able to establish permanent chapels in all of the nine sanatoria except the small one of Danasalan where there are only four Protestant members.



He Examines the Defenses

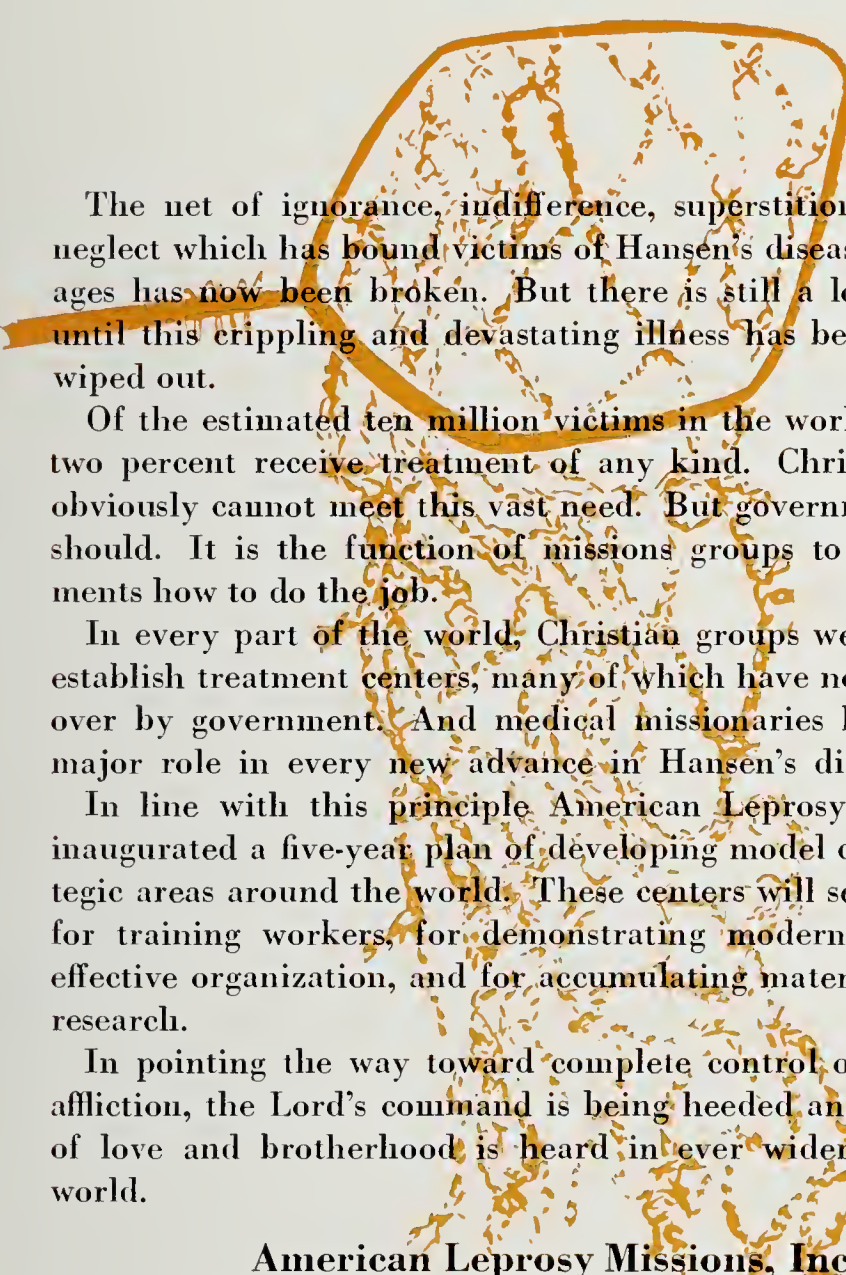
Several years ago a young pathologist at the University of Hong Kong made a survey for the government not only of the extent of Hansen's disease in the area, but also of the prevailing social attitudes toward the disease. A corps of young students combed all the small villages, talked to hundreds of inhabitants and collected a fund of stories concerning the treatment of unfortunate victims. One of these described the practice of catching them in large nets and dragging them off to be burned.

Today in that same area the young doctor, Olaf K. Skinsnes, a Lutheran missionary, is cooperating with the government in an unusually progressive and enlightened project of Hansen's disease control. Not only are there out-patient clinics at the two general hospitals in Hong Kong, but every student in the University of Hong Kong's medical school must spend one week at Hay Ling Chau, interdenominational mission hospital for Hansen's disease on Nun Island.

Established by the Mission to Lepers (London) with government assistance, Hay Ling Chau has an extensive medical center including a clinic, a hospital and a laboratory with the finest of modern equipment. Students observe the latest techniques in hand reconstruction and plastic surgery.

Recently a joint rehabilitation committee was set up of both government and mission officials with the purpose of placing every discharged H.D. patient in a job. And the government has already given some thirty patients jobs in various city departments.

Even more important to the complete control of Hansen's disease in Hong Kong is the research work in which Dr. Skinsnes is engaged. Financed by American Leprosy Missions, it involves study of the disease as it affects the whole body, especially those factors which are known to cause a breakdown in the body's defense mechanisms.



The net of ignorance, indifference, superstition, cruelty and neglect which has bound victims of Hansen's disease through the ages has now been broken. But there is still a long way to go until this crippling and devastating illness has been completely wiped out.

Of the estimated ten million victims in the world only one or two percent receive treatment of any kind. Christian missions obviously cannot meet this vast need. But governments can and should. It is the function of missions groups to show governments how to do the job.

In every part of the world, Christian groups were the first to establish treatment centers, many of which have now been taken over by government. And medical missionaries have played a major role in every new advance in Hansen's disease therapy.

In line with this principle American Leprosy Missions has inaugurated a five-year plan of developing model centers in strategic areas around the world. These centers will serve as models for training workers, for demonstrating modern therapy and effective organization, and for accumulating materials for use in research.

In pointing the way toward complete control of this ancient affliction, the Lord's command is being heeded and His message of love and brotherhood is heard in ever wider areas of the world.

American Leprosy Missions, Inc.

156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, New York

In cooperation with 62 denominational and interdenominational mission boards, American Leprosy Missions aids 160 Hansen's disease settlements, hospitals, clinics and villages in 32 countries, where 70,000 men, women and children receive treatment.

Supported solely by voluntary contributions.

